

2020 REPORT OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Dunstable Conservation Commission meets on the second and fourth Monday of each month, starting at 6:30pm. Since March, members have been meeting remotely. Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission has continued to function and serve the public's needs. Meetings are open to the public. Please check the town website for meeting information: www.dunstable-ma.gov

The Conservation Commission serves the community as a state mandated regulatory agency, which enforces MGL Ch. 131 Section 40 (The Wetland Protection Act) while also promoting the conservation and sustainable use of Dunstable's natural resources. In addition to its responsibility under the state statute, the Commission has similar responsibilities as set forth in the Dunstable General Wetlands Bylaw.

Under the Wetlands Protection Act and the Town Bylaw, the following actions were taken in the calendar year 2020:

Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area	
Delineation (ANRAD) hearings/continuations	0
Notices of Intent hearings/continuations	3
Requests for Determination/continuations	4
Certificates of Compliance	4
Building Permits	1
Occupancy Permits	3
Site Visits	27
Demolition Permits	0
Enforcement Orders/Violations	3

We would like to thank Kieran Meehan who served on the Conservation Commission and Community Preservation Committee (CPC) from 2017 to 2020. Kieran left to fill a position on the Board of Selectmen. Members welcomed Alan Starbird in January of 2020. Alan took over in June as our representative on the CPC. The Board of Selectmen appointed Kate DeLoureiro to the Commission in July and Tiffany Naughton joined as Associate Member in August.

Members would also like to thank Tara Alcorn who left the Conservation Commission in December of 2020. Tara was a valued member of the Commission and will be missed. Tiffany Naughton was appointed in January of 2021.

The Administrative Assistant, along with members of the Tyngsboro and Pepperell Conservation Commissions, participated in Rain Barrel Day. Residents ordered rain barrels and picked them up at the Tyngsboro Town Hall on a Saturday in June.

There were at least four sitings of Blanding's Turtles in the spring. Blanding's are a threatened species under the Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program.

At the Annual Town Meeting, residents voted to support the purchase of the 48-acre Emery property off High Street. This important parcel abuts Salmon Brook and lies across from the Town wellsite. In November, the Commission received word from the State that their project was awarded a LAND grant of \$192,975. In addition, Town Meeting approved \$10,000 from the Timber Fund and \$118,000 in Community Preservation Funds for the purchase.

During 2020, the western slope of Blanchard Hill was brush cut and the Stone Arch Bridge field, Blanchard Hill field and Unkety Woods mowed.

Members held a “Trail Day” in October to complete general trail maintenance on Spaulding Proctor. Additional days will be held in spring of 2021.

For information about the Conservation Commission, please go to the town website at www.dunstable-ma.gov

Useful Information

Please note that dogs must be kept leashed at all times on Conservation Commission properties.

One sometimes hears that Dunstable is “closed to hunting”. This is not the case. Dunstable does have a “discharge of firearms” bylaw. One must have the written permission of the landowner in order to discharge a firearm. As a matter of practice, the Conservation Commission does not grant such permission for land they control. Bow hunting and fishing are permitted unless the property is posted. State property (Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife) is governed by separate rules; please check their website at <http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/>

Questions sometimes arise with regard to the operation of motorized vehicles on Conservation property. Residents may wish to refer to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 90B, Section 26, paragraph (e): “No person shall operate a snow vehicle or recreation vehicle on privately-owned property unless...the operator has in his possession...a document, signed by the owner...authorizing operation of such vehicle...”. “No person shall operate a snow vehicle or recreation vehicle on publicly-owned property except on trails marked and designated for use by such vehicles, or without the express permission of the owner.”

Respectfully,

Alan Chaney - Chairman

Juan Amodei

Leah Basbanes

Al Starbird

Kate DeLoureiro

Marijan Andacic

Tiffany Naughton-Associate

Cheryl Mann-Administrative
Assistant